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The Lecture's Significance

1. On 4 Apr leading Soviet propagandist Eugene Tarle lectured an audience of 800 at the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow on "American Policy in Turkey and Greece." This expression of Soviet opinion is, by far, the best available exposition of American developments as seen by Soviet eyes, and an example of the way Moscow interprets them. Direct quotations from Tarle's speech are:

US and British Attitude Toward Eastern Europe

2. "What is now taking place within the Truman circle, within the Republican Party and part of the Democratic Party, what is being said and how it is being said, are so unusual as to merit greatest attention.....
3. "The Anglo-Saxon powers look on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as regions from which something could be taken. Where could these Eastern European countries turn, if not to the Soviet Union, which is their only support? There are many illustrations of this Anglo-Saxon attitude. In Yugoslavia it was a question of ships which were held by Americans. When America was asked why it did not return these ships the answer came back simply: 'Because we don't, that's all there is to it.'
4. "A similar attitude was displayed on the Polish border with Germany in Byrnes' Stuttgart speech.
5. "As a result Eastern Europe, not conquered by the Soviet Union, supports Soviet policy. And Eastern Europe is firmly supporting the Soviet Union out of its own interests.

Tragedy of President Roosevelt's Death

6. "An unfortunate incident occurred in the death of Roosevelt, a man of great historic proportions who is among the three greatest Americans, standing

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25

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- 2 -

with Washington and Lincoln and not the least of the three. Then those who had not wished to help the Soviet Union in the first place at once began to say the Soviet Union was the only threat left in the world. But neither in the East nor in the West do we threaten anyone.....

Increase in Anti-USSR Pressure

7. "In the spring of 1946, after the first diplomatic clashes had shown that the Soviet Union was not frightened, it became necessary to intensify pressure. On March 12th the overture was performed to the symphony which is now being played. Churchill delivered a speech in Fulton, Missouri, calling for war against the Soviet Union and indicated that time was running out and that America should act while it still enjoyed exclusive possession of the atomic bomb. It is not only the content of the speech which is important. The President of the United States sat on the same platform and did not hide his full approval.

Comparison of Presidents Truman and Roosevelt

8. "I shall not speak at length on the personal role of Truman. Even if he had wanted to oppose the trend he would have found it very difficult. True, if one recalls that Roosevelt clashed constantly with Congress and nevertheless continued fighting, one must at the same time admit that he was in a different situation. The great American people had four times elected him. This was enough to give him force hard to ignore. If it were not for his iron character, great heart and mind, he would not have made the grade. All Presidents cannot be Roosevelts. This would be to demand that all poets write like Pushkin. Truman has none of the personal qualities of Roosevelt. Roosevelt was elected four times. Truman has really never been elected. When Truman was made Vice-President no one had looked forward to the misfortune which took place. Human beings like to expect only good.

9. "Truman was faced with a movement with which he could not have coped even had he wanted to continue the democratic policy of Roosevelt. But he did not want to and this greatly facilitated his role and weakened the chances of maintaining order in the world..."

Secretary Marshall's Appointment

10. "In the spring of 1947 two important developments occurred. But before this an outstanding diplomat and military man, Marshall, was named to replace Byrnes. At first this produced a good impression. Not that his biography inspired particular confidence, but it was true, nevertheless. Perhaps it was because he had promised full withdrawal of American troops from China and also denied rumors that the Russians were ruling China. In this case at least he had prevented the development of a vicious rumor. I hasten to say I do not wish to comment on Marshall's actions.

Enunciation of "Truman Doctrine"

11. "On March 12th Truman asked Congress for \$400 million to save 'free institutions' from danger. These 'free institutions' were in Greece and Turkey. The 'democrats' were Tsaldaris and his counterparts in Turkey. Democracy must be saved and 'free Institutions' rescued from the danger from the North. It was Russia who was supposed to be threatening from the North.....

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- 3 -

Anti-Labor Tendency in US

12. "Simultaneously the American Government engaged in another series of measures directly connected with foreign policy. These events began in 1946 but have now reached their most violent pitch. At the beginning of the summer of 1946 Americans saw tremendous strikes which shut down their railroads, spread to the mines, textile industries, and so forth, creating an intolerable situation.

13. "Republican leaders, displaying great consistency, began to urge Truman to put an end to this situation. The logic was perfectly correct from their viewpoint. A country with such tremendous industrial development as America could not think of aggression without first smashing the working class. This is what Hitler had done before starting his aggression. If this were not done it would be impossible to wage war. They pressed Truman to pass the Case bill, to mobilize troops to run the railroads, etc. Otherwise, they argued, aggressive policy abroad would have to be given up.

14. "Truman was ready but could not make up his mind last summer. Now a similar situation is developing all over again. One hundred eleven miners recently were killed in a mine catastrophe in the State of Illinois. The miners say it occurred because no safety measures were taken by bosses who thought them too expensive.

US "Purge" of Communists

15. "Mad hatred was around in Republicans against these miners. They feared the same thing might happen as happened last year. This time it was decided to reply with a direct attack. It was decided to charge the Communists with having arranged the catastrophe. Something began which had never before characterized America. Truman issued an order saying that internal danger was so great that every government institution, no matter how small, must have a committee to supervise activities of employees and dismiss those with an insufficiently patriotic pattern of behavior.

16. "Not all Democrats and Republicans support this position. Within the Democratic Party not only Wallace but a large number of others opposed it. They said there were very few Communists in America, there was no dream of overthrowing the government, and so the threat in Greece had been thought up. This was political madness for a definite purpose.

17. "But government spokesman said that the government's patience had come to an end. True, there was not even a shadow of fact to show the connection between the Communists and the mine disaster but in a case of this kind no proof was needed. Truman made up his mind at this point. In the case of Greece and Turkey it has been clear that Truman was acting under others' influence. But in this case where Communists were concerned, he would not allow himself to be outstripped.....

Soviet Reaction

18. "In all this we occupy the position of observers. Stalin's formula, when asked what he thought of American warships in the Mediterranean, very accurately describes the Soviet attitude now: 'Indifferent.' We are not alarmed but we are watchful.

Importance of American Oil Interests

19. "In America those who want to prevent war say it is not democracy in Turkey and Greece but Middle Eastern oil which is really involved. American interests are connected with oil in Syria, Iran, Iraq, etc. As long as Russia is nearby, their power to take over everything they want is limited. Thus Russia must not be admitted to the Mediterranean in any case but must be surrounded by a sort of belt.....

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- 4 -

Linking of Truman Speech and UN

20. "In the past few weeks important changes are already to be noted. They are small, not yet decisive and nothing is very clear. But there is hesitation now in those circles which thus far had not hesitated. A few days ago Austin said it was necessary to link Truman's speech to the United Nations. Then Vandenberg, most influential man, of incontestable mind and character, who is one of the most determining agents of American foreign policy, introduced an amendment to the Truman speech calling for linking it with the United Nations. Opponents of the Truman policy have already remarked that the Vandenberg amendment is transparent. The result of colossal meetings gathered to denounce aggressive policy, of meetings and speeches of important people in America—and not only Henry Wallace—was that Vandenberg was forced to seek cover in the United Nations. The evolution is significant. When Truman first made his speech there was talk that the United Nations was too weak to act, that it was another League of Nations. As a result of pressure which has been building up advocates of this policy in Greece have had to seek refuge in the United Nations. They feel it would be nice to harmonize officially so that in the long run oil would go to Wall Street and the United Nations would get the blame for whatever took place.

Decreasing Importance of Atomic Bomb

21. "How is this evolution to be explained? Our remarks here are based exclusively on the American press and books. There has been a significant silence about certain important developments in America. Grey days followed the honeymoon of the atomic bomb. From various sources came opinions which lessened America in regard to this frightful weapon. First there have been remarks by extremely qualified people, scientists, who have said that the atomic bomb monopoly is temporary. Moreover the Bikini atom bomb test cost \$20 million for one bomb—even the American budget cannot allow itself such luxury. Moreover there have been comments from military sources to the effect that with present development of troop movements it is impossible to destroy land armies with atomic bombs. Besides if the enemy has no atomic bombs but had sufficiently perfected rocket weapons (the German had V-3 and others may have even V-4) and fast planes, even if they be not as fast as American planes, he can do tremendous damage say Americans.

22. "I shall also cite comment from American military circles. The following argument was heard. War begins between America and Russia. Bombs are ready to pulverize Russia. What do the Russians do? Of course they cross the Elbe and the borders of Manchuria and really proceed to occupy Europe. The more quickly a Western bloc is formed the more rapidly will Russian seizures take place. Moreover the Russians won't even have to fight. One out of every three men in France is Communist and France will accept Russians without fighting. If there is any resistance it is clear how it will end.

23. "What then? Bomb Leningrad and Moscow! Exactly nothing is accomplished. You cannot destroy the Russian Army which will be in Europe and it is impossible to bomb all Europe. There will be a war of nerves but not only on Russian nerves but American nerves. Both sides will be unable to come to grips with each other. After this, after the Red Army has been in Europe, Europe will not be as before but will be more like the Russian zone in Germany.

24. "Thus this war does not promise much success. In the case of Japan the atomic bomb accelerated the end but did not decide the conflict. Before that the entire Japanese Navy had been smashed and the land forces in Manchuria as well. It is now proposed that war will start and not end with the atomic bomb.

25. "Among such a people as Americans a statement like Truman's could not go unanswered. Responses influenced Vandenberg and forced him to tie his speech in with the United Nations.

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